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In Farm Setting, Patton Announces New Ag Development Board Members

Versailles, Ky. - Surrounded by hay bales and farm equipment, Governor Paul Patton today announced his appointments to the new Kentucky Agricultural Development Board inside a barn on the Waverly Farm in Woodford County. This new board was created during the legislative session earlier this year to oversee that portion of the state's tobacco settlement proceeds set aside for agricultural development. The board will use \$180 million over the next 2 years to stimulate agricultural economic development in the wake of drastically reduced tobacco quotas and historically low farm commodity prices.

"In the past, we've not run short on ideas of how to make money on our farms. People all across the state are proving everyday that there's money to be made in farm products in addition to tobacco," Governor Patton said today in announcing the board appointments. "But in the past we have run short on the resources necessary to put those ideas into action. That's not the case anymore," the Governor added.

Governor Patton stressed that agriculture means much more than economic value to the Commonwealth.

"It's not just the economic importance of agriculture that will drive the actions of this board. As I've said many times over the past few years, farm life is important to Kentucky because of the contributions it makes to our families and their communities. It's the work ethic, the meaning of independence, the importance of making good decisions, and the heritage of farm and rural life that makes the tasks of this board truly important," the Governor said.

The board appointments were announced on a farm in Woodford County owned by Hoppy Henton and his wife Ivy. They raise both conventional and no-till tobacco, corn, wheat, soybeans, beef cattle, shrimp and trout here. They also recently sold a conservation easement on a 30-acre tract that ensures the land will remain in agricultural use into perpetuity.

As Chairman of the Board, Governor Patton will be asking board members to articulate a vision of agricultural clusters around the state, recognizing the natural assets and limitations of our geographic regions, and using that information to leverage as much as possible the resources presented by the tobacco settlement.

"We must seek to develop our farm economy in ways that build on the natural assets and resources of our various regions," said Governor Patton.

The statute that created the Board names the Governor as chair, the Commissioner of Agriculture as Vice-Chair, the Secretary of Economic Development, and the Director of the Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service as statutory members.

Eleven members were appointed by the Governor and represent the state from Hickman County to Perry County, a broad array of farming enterprises, and bring a wealth of business, financial, and legal experience to the job. While the board includes representation from all corners of the state, it is heavy in representation from the two areas most negatively impacted by changes in the tobacco economy: south central

Kentucky, down the I-65 corridor, and northeastern Kentucky, around Robertson, Mason, and Bath counties.

The appointed members include a total of 7 active farmers, one representative of the Kentucky Farm Bureau, one representative of the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce, one agricultural lender and one attorney with a rural background and knowledge of agricultural policy.

The farmer representatives include:

Seth Conner, Hickman County, to a 3-year term.

Wayne Hunt, Christian County, to a 2-year term.

Michael L. Slaughter, Hart County, to a 4-year term

Willa H. Poynter, Mason County, to a 1-year term

Larry Clay, Perry County, to a 4-year term

Susan Harkins, Bourbon County, to a 3-year term

Howard “Eddie” Sellers, III, Woodford County, to a 4-year term

The attorney with rural experience and knowledge of agricultural policy is:

Keith A. Jeffries, Henry County, to a 2-year term

The agricultural lender is:

Daniel C. Case, Robertson County, to a 2-year term

The Kentucky Farm Bureau representative is:

Sam Moore, Butler County, to a 1-year term

The Kentucky Chamber of Commerce Representative is:

Sam Lawson, Warren County, to a 3-year term

The Governor will convene the board for its first meeting on July 19 at 9:30 AM EDT/8:30 AM CDT at the University of Kentucky Agricultural Experiment Station in Princeton, Kentucky.